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December 16, 2004

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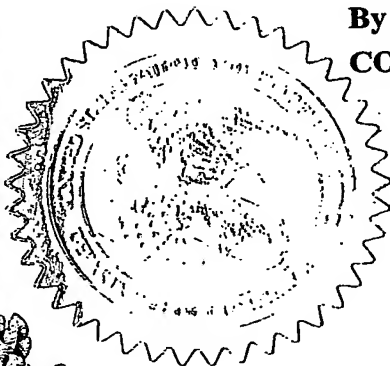
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FILING DATE UNDER 35 USC 111.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 10/750,145

FILING DATE: December 31, 2003

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PTO/SB/05 (08-03)

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16018 U.S. PTO
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123103

UTILITY
PATENT APPLICATION
TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Attorney Docket No.	ESSR:076US
First Inventor	Peiqi JIANG
Title	Process for Making a Coated Optical Article Free of Visible Fining Lines
Express Mail Label No.	EV 323284051 US

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

ADDRESS TO:

Mail Stop Patent Application
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria VA 22313-1450

1. ☒ Fee Transmittal Form (e.g., PTO/SB/17)
(Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing)
2. ☐ Applicant claims small entity status.
See 37 CFR 1.27.
3. ☒ Specification [Total Pages 23]
(preferred arrangement set forth below)
 - Descriptive title of the invention
 - Cross Reference to Related Applications
 - Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D
 - Reference to sequence listing, a table, or a computer program listing appendix
 - Background of the invention
 - Brief Summary of the invention
 - Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
 - Detailed Description
 - Claim(s)
 - Abstract of the Disclosure
4. ☒ Drawing(s) (35 U.S.C. 113) [Total Sheets 2]
5. Oath or Declaration [Total Sheets]
 - a. ☐ Newly executed (original or copy)
 - b. ☐ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d))
(for continuation/divisional with Box 18 completed)
 - c. ☐ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) name in the prior application, see 37 CFR 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).
6. ☒ Application Data Sheet. See 37 CFR 1.76

7. ☐ CD-ROM or CD-R in duplicate, large table or Computer Program (Appendix)
8. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission (if applicable, all necessary)
 - a. ☐ Computer Readable Form (CRF)
 - b. Specification Sequence Listing on:
 - i. ☐ CD-ROM or CD-R (2 copies); or
 - ii. ☐ Paper
 - c. ☐ Statements verifying identity of above copies

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

9. ☐ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
10. ☐ 37 CFR 3.73(b) Statement of Attorney (when there is an assignee) ☐ Power of Attorney
11. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)
12. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of IDS Citations
13. ☐ Preliminary Amendment
14. ☒ Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)
(Should be specifically itemized)
15. ☐ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s)
(if foreign priority is claimed)
16. ☐ Nonpublication Request under 35 U.S.C. 122 (b)(2)(B)(i). Applicant must attach form PTO/SB/35 or its equivalent.
17. ☐ Other:

18. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box, and supply the requisite information below and in the first sentence of the specification following the title, or in an Application Data Sheet under 37 CFR 1.76:

☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No.:

Prior application information:

Examiner

Art Unit:

For CONTINUATION OF DIVISIONAL APPS only; The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which an oath or declaration is supplied under Box 5b, is considered a part of the disclosure of the accompanying continuation or divisional application and is hereby incorporated by reference. The incorporation can only be relied upon when a portion has been inadvertently omitted from the submitted application parts.

19. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

☒ Customer Number: 32425 OR ☐ Correspondence address below

Name			
Address			
City	State	Zip Code	
Country	Telephone	Fax	

Name (Print/Type)	Mark B. Wilson	Registration No. (Attorney/Agent)	37,259
Signature		Date	12/31/2003

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**FEE TRANSMITTAL
for FY 2003**

Effective 01/01/2003. Patent fees are subject to annual revision.

☐ Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27**TOTAL AMOUNT OF PAYMENT** (\$)**1,184.00****Complete if Known**

Application Number	
Filing Date	12/31/2003
First Named Inventor	Peiqi JIANG
Examiner Name	Unknown
Art Unit	Unknown
Attorney Docket No.	ESSR:076US

METHOD OF PAYMENT (check all that apply)☒ Check ☐ Credit card ☐ Money Order ☐ Other ☐ None☒ Deposit Account:Deposit Account Number
50-1212Deposit Account Name
Fulbright & Jaworski

The Commissioner is authorized to: (check all that apply)

☐ Charge fee(s) indicated below ☒ Credit any overpayments☒ Charge any additional fee(s) during the pendency of this application☐ Charge fee(s) indicated below, except for the filing fee to the above-identified deposit account.**FEE CALCULATION****1. BASIC FILING FEE**

Large Entity		Small Entity		Fee Description	Fee Paid
Fee Code	Fee (\$)	Fee Code	Fee (\$)		
1001	750	2001	375	Utility filing fee	770.00
1002	330	2002	165	Design filing fee	
1003	520	2003	260	Plant filing fee	
1004	750	2004	375	Reissue filing fee	
1005	160	2005	80	Provisional filing fee	

SUBTOTAL (1) (\$)**770.00****2. EXTRA CLAIM FEES FOR UTILITY AND REISSUE**

Total Claims		Extra Claims		Fee from below		Fee Paid	
43	-20** =	23	X	18	=	414.00	
2	-3** =	0	X		=	0	
Independent Claims							
Multiple Dependent							

Large Entity		Small Entity		Fee Description	Fee Paid
Fee Code	Fee (\$)	Fee Code	Fee (\$)		
1202	18	2202	9	Claims in excess of 20	
1201	84	2201	42	Independent claims in excess of 3	
1203	280	2203	140	Multiple dependent claim, if not paid	
1204	84	2204	42	** Reissue independent claims over original patent	
1205	18	2205	9	** Reissue claims in excess of 20 and over original patent	

SUBTOTAL (2) (\$)**414.00**

**or number previously paid, if greater; For Reissues, see above

FEE CALCULATION (continued)**3. ADDITIONAL FEES**

Large Entity | Small Entity

Fee Code	Fee (\$)	Fee Code	Fee (\$)	Fee Description	Fee Paid
1051	130	2051	65	Surcharge - late filing fee or oath	
1052	50	2052	25	Surcharge - late provisional filing fee or cover sheet	
1053	130	1053	130	Non-English specification	
1812	2,520	1812	2,520	For filing a request for ex parte reexamination	
1804	920*	1804	920*	Requesting publication of SIR prior to Examiner action	
1805	1,840*	1805	1,840*	Requesting publication of SIR after Examiner action	
1251	110	2251	55	Extension for reply within first month	
1252	410	2252	205	Extension for reply within second month	
1253	930	2253	465	Extension for reply within third month	
1254	1,450	2254	725	Extension for reply within fourth month	
1255	1,970	2255	985	Extension for reply within fifth month	
1401	320	2401	160	Notice of Appeal	
1402	320	2402	160	Filing a brief in support of an appeal	
1403	280	2403	140	Request for oral hearing	
1451	1,510	1451	1,510	Petition to institute a public use proceeding	
1452	110	2452	55	Petition to revive - unavoidable	
1453	1,300	2453	650	Petition to revive - unintentional	
1501	1,300	2501	650	Utility issue fee (or reissue)	
1502	470	2502	235	Design issue fee	
1503	630	2503	315	Plant issue fee	
1460	130	1460	130	Petitions to the Commissioner	
1807	50	1807	50	Processing fee under 37 CFR 1.17(q)	
1806	180	1806	180	Submission of Information Disclosure Stmt	
8021	40	8021	40	Recording each patent assignment per property (times number of properties)	
1809	750	2809	375	Filing a submission after final rejection (37 CFR 1.129(a))	
1810	750	2810	375	For each additional invention to be examined (37 CFR 1.129(b))	
1801	750	2801	375	Request for Continued Examination (RCE)	
1802	900	1802	900	Request for expedited examination of a design application	

Other fee (specify)

*Reduced by Basic Filing Fee Paid

SUBTOTAL (3) (\$)**SUBMITTED BY**

(Complete if applicable)

Name (Print/Type)	Mark B. Wilson	Registration No. (Attorney/Agent)	37,259	Telephone	512-536-3035
Signature		Date	12/31/2003		

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PATENT
ESSR:076US

APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT
for
PROCESS FOR MAKING A COATED OPTICAL ARTICLE FREE
OF VISIBLE FINING LINES

by
Peiqi Jiang
Steven Weber
and
Fadi O. Adileh

<u>EXPRESS MAIL MAILING LABEL</u>	
NUMBER	<u>EV 323284051 US</u>
DATE OF DEPOSIT	<u>December 31, 2003</u>

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a process for making a coated optical article, in particular an ophthalmic lens, a lens blank or a lens mold, free of visible fining lines, and in particular for directly forming a functional coating, such as an anti-abrasion hard coating, onto a fined but unpolished main face of an optical article, whereby no fining lines are visible when the coated lens blank is illuminated with an arc lamp. This process may be designated as "press coating process".

The main faces of an ophthalmic lens blank, such as a lens blank made of a transparent plastic material, are classically subjected to a surface mechanical treatment.

This mechanical treatment comprises a group of operations leading to the production of a lens blank whose main faces are perfectly polished and have the desired curvatures (optical powers).

The mechanical treatment typically comprises three successive steps : grinding, fine grinding (also called fining) and polishing.

Grinding is a mechanical processing step intended to create the curvature on the face of the lens blank.

Fine grinding (fining), performed after grinding further changes the geometry of the treated face of the lens blank but can lead to a translucent lens blank whose treated face still shows significant surface roughness. Typically, the R_q of the fined face is above $0.01\mu\text{m}$, and preferably ranges from 0.05 to $1.5\mu\text{m}$, more preferably from 0.1 to $1.0\mu\text{m}$.

Finally, the polishing, a relatively long mechanical processing step, which does not change the geometry of the treated face, removes the remaining roughness as far as possible to give the final transparent lens blank. Typically, the surface roughness R_q of the polished face of the lens blank ranges under $0.01\mu\text{m}$, preferably around $0.05\mu\text{m}$.

Following the mechanical treatment, functional coatings such as primer coating, impact-resistant coating, anti-abrasion hard coating, anti-reflective coating and top coat are classically deposited on the mechanically treated main face of the lens blank.

Avoiding the cumbersome polishing step of the main face of the lens blank prior forming a functional coating on the main face of the lens blank would thus be a definitive advantage for both economy and environment.

US patent n°4,417,790 and international patent application WO 01/67139 disclose spin or dip coating a fined but unpolished main face of a lens. The coating thickness is at least more than 10 times higher than the surface roughness of the fined main face and in WO 01/67139 application the difference of value of the refractive indexes between the lens material and the coating material shall be less than 0.01. Although the resulting coating lens becomes transparent using such a coating thickness or refractive index matching, the fining lines on the lens main face, i.e. the lines resulting from the fine grinding processing step, remain visible in particular when the coated lens is illuminated by an arc lamp.

US patent n°6,562,466 discloses a process for transferring a coating onto a main face of a lens blank which comprises depositing a requisite amount of a curable glue on a main face of a lens blank, bringing a coating born by a flexible support in contact with the curable glue, applying a pressure to the flexible support to spread the glue and form a uniform layer of glue on the main face of the lens, curing the glue and withdrawing the support, whereby one recovers a lens blank having the coating adhering to the main face of the lens blank.

Although coated lens blank free of visible fining lines may be obtained with the above coating transfer process, the thickness of the final coating including the cured glue layer and the transferred coating is typically of 25 μm or more and the transferred coating comprises several layers of different chemistry.

Applicant has now found that it is possible to make a coated optical article, especially a lens blank, free of visible fining lines in which the coated main face of the article is merely fine grinded but not polished and even though the coating is a thin coating, for example has a thickness of 10 μm or less, and/or the refractive index difference between the coating and the article, in particular a lens blank, is high, for example is up to 0.05, even 0.1 or more.

Other classical spin, dip or flow coating cannot lead to an article free of visible fining lines when the article is illuminated by an arc lamp.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This is an object of the invention to provide a process for making a an optical article free of visible fining lines, in which the coating is directly formed on a fined but unpolished main surface of the article;

5 It is a further object of the invention to provide a process as defined above in which the coating has a thickness of 50 μm or less;

It is also an additional object of the invention to provide a process as defined above in which the difference in the refractive index values between the coating and the lens blank may be up to 0.1 and more.

10 In accordance with the above objects and those that will be mentioned and will become apparent below, the process for making a coated optical article free of visible fining lines according to the invention comprises :

- (i) providing an optical article having at last one fined but unpolished
15 geometrically defined main face ;
- (ii) providing a mold part having an internal and an external surface;
- (iii) depositing on said main face of said optical article or on the internal surface of the mold part a requisite amount of a liquid curable coating composition ;
- 20 - (iv) moving relatively to each other the optical article and the mold part to either bring the coating composition into contact with the main face of the optical article or into contact with the internal surface of the mold part ;
- (v) applying pressure to the mold part to spread the liquid curable
25 coating composition on said main face and form a uniform layer of the liquid coating composition onto the main face ;
- (vi) curing the liquid coating composition layer ;
- (vii) withdrawing the mold part; and
- (viii) recovering a free of visible fining lines coated optical article.

30 Preferably, the pressure is maintained during the curing step.

By a requisite amount of liquid curable coating composition one means at least a sufficient amount for forming a final coating covering the entire surface area of the main face to be coated.

The present invention also concerns a process for making a coated article whose main surface has a surface state corresponding to a polished state which comprises :

- 5 (i) providing an article having at least one fined but unpolished geometrically defined main face ;
- (ii) providing a mold part having an internal and external surface ;
- (iii) depositing on said main face of said article or on the internal surface of the mold part a requisite amount of a liquid curable coating composition;
- 10 (iv) moving relatively to each other the article and the mold part to either bring the coating composition into contact with the main face of the article or into contact with the internal face of the mold part ;
- (v) applying pressure to the mold part to spread the liquid curable coating composition on said main face and form a uniform liquid coating composition layer onto the main face of the article;
- 15 (vi) curing the liquid composition layer;
- (vii) withdrawing the mold part and
- (viii) recovering the coating article having a surface state corresponding to a polished state.

20 The following description will be made referring in most of the cases to a lens blank.

The lens blank for use in the present process may be made of any transparent plastic material typically used for making optical lenses and in particular ophthalmic lenses. Among the preferred plastic materials there
25 may be cited diethylene glycol bis-allyl carbonate (such as CR 39[®] from PPG INDUSTRIES), polycarbonates (PC), polyurethanes, polythiourethanes, poly(meth)acrylates and polyepisulfide based polymer and copolymers.

The plastic material may optionally contain one or more
30 photochromic material. Also, the lens blank material may be tinted.

At least one main face of the lens blank to be coated using the process of the invention has been fined but unpolished. Typically, such a fined but unpolished main face will have a R_q of 0.05 to 1.5 μm , preferably of 0.1 to 1.0 μm . When the lens blank is made of diethylene glycol bis-allyl
35 carbonate polymer, the surface roughness R_q of the fined but unpolished

main face is generally about 1.0 μm , whereas when the lens blank is made of polycarbonate, the surface roughness of the fined but unpolished main face is generally about 0.5 μm .

5 The lens blank and generally any article that can be treated by the process of the invention may also be a fined but not polished lens blank which has been previously coated by conventional coating processes such as spin coating, flow coating and spray coating.

Indeed, as explained previously, such a conventional coating process is not able to suppress fining lines visible by arc lamp illumination.

10 The process of the invention will be particularly preferred for lenses which have been coated, using conventional processes, with a thin coating film of less than 5 μm , preferably less than 2 μm .

Preferably, the process of the invention is used for coating fined but unpolished lens blanks.

15 The lens blank can be a lens having one or both of its main faces surfaced or casted to the required geometry (a lens having only one of its main faces or casted to the required geometry is called a semi-finished lens).

Preferably, the lens blank has a first face conferring progressive power and a second face conferring non-progressive power, but of spherical or torical shape onto which coating application according to the invention process is preferably performed. Preferably, the progressive face is the front face of the blank. However, if the progressive face is on the back face of the lens or lens blank, it is possible to apply the coating on the back face using the process of the invention.

25 The lens blank can also be a semi-finished lens wherein one face of the lens, preferably the front face of the lens has previously been treated with an appropriate coating (anti-reflective, hard coat, etc...) and the remaining face, preferably the rear face, of the lens is coated using the process of the invention. The lens blank can be a polarized lens.

30 The lens blank can be pre-treated before applying the process of the invention.

The pre-treatment can be physical, for example a plasma treatment, or chemical, for example a solvent treatment or a NaOH treatment.

35 Preferably, the fined and unpolished coated main face of the lens blank is the back concave main face of the lens.

However, the front convex main face or both main faces of the lens blank can be fined and unpolished and directly coated using the process of the invention.

5 The curable liquid coating composition can be any well known curable liquid coating composition typically used for forming functional coatings in the optical lens field, such as in particular primer coating compositions (improving adhesion of subsequent coating onto the lens blank), impact-resistant coating compositions, and anti-abrasive hard coating compositions.

10 Preferred impact-resistant and primer coating compositions are polyurethane latex or acrylic latex compositions.

Preferred anti-abrasion hard coating compositions comprise a hydrolyzate of one or more epoxysilane(s) and one or more inorganic filler(s) such as colloidal silica.

15 The curable liquid coating compositions can be thermally cured or cured through light irradiation, in particular UV irradiation or both. Preferably, the curable liquid coating compositions are UV curable coating compositions and in particular UV curable anti-abrasion hard coating compositions.

20 After application and cure of the coating composition according to the process of the invention, the resulting cured coating has generally a thickness ranging from 1 to 50 μm , preferably from 1 to 25 μm and more preferably from 1 to 10 μm , typically of about 5 μm .

25 Preferably, R_q of the coated face of the optical article is under 0.01 μm .

The curable liquid coating composition is preferably deposited onto the fined and unpolished main face of the lens blank in the form of a drop in the centre of the face or of several drops on different points of the main face.

30 The amount of curable liquid coating composition must be sufficient to at least fill up the grooves of the surface roughness and form a uniform layer on the entire surface area of the main face.

The mold part may be rigid and its internal face inversely replicates said main face of the optical article.

The mold part may be flexible and its internal face inversely replicates said main face of the optical article under the pressure applied in step (v).

5 The pressurizing flexible mold part can be a flexible wafer, preferably having higher base curvature than the curvature of the fined and unpolished lens blank to be coated, especially when the back side of the lens blank is to be coated.

10 The flexible wafer can be made of any appropriate material, preferably of a flexible plastic material, especially a thermoplastic material and in particular of polycarbonate.

The working surface of the flexible wafer i.e. the surface of the wafer in contact with the curable liquid coating composition may have a relief organized according to a pattern, in other words, may be microstructured and may confer to the final lens an optical surface having the properties
15 imparted by the microstructure (for example antireflective properties).

Different techniques for obtaining a microstructured mold part are disclosed in WO99/29494.

When using this flexible wafer, it is only necessary to provide the wafer with a surface the geometry of which conforms to the general shape of the
20 optical surface of the lens blank onto which the coating is to be applied, either a concave or convex shape, but it is not necessary that this surface strictly corresponds to the geometry of the lens blank surface to be coated. Thus, the same flexible wafer can be used for applying coatings onto lens blanks having surfaces of different specific geometries. Generally, the
25 flexible wafer has two parallel main surfaces and consequently has an even thickness.

Flexible wafers typically have a thickness of 0.2 to 5 mm, preferably of 0.3 to 5 mm. More preferably, the flexible wafer is made of polycarbonate, and in this case the thickness is from 0.5 to 1 mm.

30 Preferably, the flexible wafers are light transparent, in particular the UV light, thus permitting UV curing of the coating composition.

According to the invention, a pressure is exerted on the external surface of the wafer (i.e. the surface of the wafer which is not in contact with the coating composition) and is preferably substantially maintained at
35 least up to the gelling of the composition. Maintaining the pressure can be

effected through the use of an inflatable membrane placed on the external surface of the wafer.

The applied pressure usually ranges from 10 to 350 kPa (3.5 kgf/cm²), and preferably from 30 to 150 kPa, even better 30 to 100 kPa.

5 As previously mentioned, pressurization of the flexible wafer may be effected using an inflatable membrane.

The inflatable membrane can be made of any elastomeric material which can be sufficiently deformed by pressurization with appropriate fluid for urging the flexible wafer against the lens or lens blank in conformity
10 with the surface geometry of the lens or the lens blank.

Typically, the inflatable membrane has a thickness ranging from 0.50 mm to 5.0 mm and an elongation of 100 to 800%, and a durometer 10 to 100 Shore A.

If the coating composition is thermally cured, then the material of the
15 inflatable membrane shall be selected to bear the curing temperature.

If the coating composition is UV cured, then a transparent material shall be selected, for example a transparent silicone rubber or other transparent rubbers or latexes: the UV light is preferably irradiated from the mold part side.

20 The pressure applied to the mold part by the inflatable membrane typically ranges from 10 kPa to 150 kPa and will depend on the lens or lens blank and flexible wafer sizes and curvatures. Of course, the pressure needs to be maintained onto the flexible wafer and the lens or lens blank until the coating composition is sufficiently cured so that enough adhesion of the
25 coating to the lens or lens blank is obtained.

The flexible part of the process of the invention may be the inflatable membrane itself described above, in particular an inflatable membrane of an air accumulator apparatus. In that case, of course, no flexible wafer is used.

30 Similar pressures as with a flexible wafer are used with the inflatable membrane.

Either the wafer or the inflatable membrane can be pre-coated, for example with a release coating, to exhibit good optical surface for keeping optical grade of the coated lens blank.

As for the flexible wafer, the inflatable membrane may comprise in its surface contacting the coating composition a micro-structure or pattern that will be duplicated in the lens blank coating during the coating process.

The final coated lens blanks obtained by the process of the invention
5 have very good optical quality and they have no visible fining lines under arc lamp illumination.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The foregoing and other objects, features and advantages of the
10 present invention will become readily apparent to those skilled in the art from a reading of the detailed description hereafter when considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein :

- Figures 1A and 1B are schematic views of the main steps of a first embodiment of the process of the invention for forming a coating onto
15 fined but unpolished main face of a lens blank, using a flexible wafer as the flexible part ; and
- Figures 2A and 2B are schematic views of the main steps of a second embodiment of the process of the invention using directly the inflatable membrane of an air accumulator apparatus as the flexible part.

20

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Figures 1A and 1B are schematic views of an embodiment of the process of the invention in which the coating is performed through a flexible wafer urged against the lens blank fined and unpolished main face
25 using an inflatable membrane apparatus.

Figure 1A shows the lens blank 1, flexible wafer 4 and inflatable membrane 14 before pressurization and inflation of the membrane, whereas figure 1B shows the same after pressurization and inflation of the membrane 14.

30 Although, the following description will be made in connection with UV curing of the liquid coating composition, similar apparatus and process can be used with a thermally curable coating composition.

Referring to figure 1A, a lens blank 1, for example a toric lens blank, is placed in a lens blank support 2 with its fine but unpolished geometrically
35 defined main face 1a facing outwardly.

A drop of UV curable liquid coating composition 3 is deposited at the center of the geometrically defined main face 1a of the lens blank 1.

A thin flexible wafer 4, for example a spheric wafer, is placed on the coating composition.

5 The whole assembly is then placed in front of the membrane 14 of an inflatable membrane apparatus 10.

10 The inflatable membrane apparatus 10 comprises a fluid accumulator 11, for example an air accumulator provided with fluid port 12, for example an air port connected to a pressurized fluid source (not represented) for introducing pressurized fluid within the accumulator and also evacuating
15 pressurized fluid from the accumulator. The upper face of the accumulator 10 comprises a light transparent portion 13, for example a UV transparent quartz glass portion, whereas the lower face of the accumulator 10 comprises a transparent inflatable membrane 14 in register with the
15 transparent quartz glass 13.

20 As shown in figure 1A, the apparatus 10 further comprises a guiding means 15 for laterally guiding the inflatable membrane 14 during inflation thereof. More specifically, this guiding means comprises a trunconical part or funnel 15 projecting outwardly from the lower face of the accumulator 10 and whose greater base is obturated by the inflatable membrane 14 and
20 whose smaller base is a circular opening having a diameter at least equal to the base diameter of the flexible wafer 4 but preferably slightly larger (up to 5 mm larger).

25 Typically, the funnel height will range from 10 to 50 mm, preferably 10 to 25 mm, and will have a taper of 10 to 90°, preferably 30 to 50°.

Finally, a light source, for example a UV light source 16 is placed behind the accumulator 10 in front of the transparent quartz plate 13.

30 Generally, the assembly comprising the lens blank holder 2, the lens blank 1, the coating composition drop 3 and the flexible wafer 4 is placed so that the rim of the flexible wafer 4 be within the plan of the rim of the smaller base opening of funnel 15 or separated therefrom by a distance up to 50 mm, preferably up to 20 mm.

35 As shown in figure 1B, a pressurized fluid, such as pressurized air, is introduced into the accumulator 11 from an external source (not represented) through entrance 12. The pressure increase within the

accumulator, inflates the inflatable membrane 14 and, thanks to the membrane guiding means 15, the membrane 14 uniformly urges the flexible wafer 4 against the lens blank 1, while uniformly spreading the coating composition 3.

5 The coating composition is then UV-cured.

After completion of the curing step, the lens blank 1 is disassembled from the holder 2 and the flexible wafer 4 is removed to recover a lens blank 1 whose geometrically defined surface 1a is provided with a coating.

10 Of course, in case of a thermal curing process, light source and transparent portion of the upper face of the accumulator are not needed.

In this case also, the inflatable membrane needs not to be transparent. Otherwise, the apparatus remains the same.

15 Figures 2A and 2B are schematic views of another embodiment of the process in which the inflatable membrane 14 of the apparatus 10 is directly used as the flexible part for uniformly spreading the UV curable liquid coating composition 3 on the fined but unpolished main face 1a of the lens blank 1.

Otherwise, the coating process proceeds in a similar manner as disclosed in connection with Figures 1A and 1B.

20 In the description and the following examples the surface roughness S_q of the fined but unpolished main face of the lens blank is as follows :

S_q : Quadratic mean of the deviations from the mean

$$S_q = \sqrt{\frac{1}{NM} \sum_{x=1}^N \sum_{y=1}^M Z_{x,y}^2}$$

25 Computes the efficient value for the amplitudes of the surfaces (RMS). This parameter is included in the EUR 15178 EN report (Commission of the European Communities) Stout et Al 1993: The development of methods for the characterisation of roughness in three
30 dimensions.

The roughness (S_q) is measured by P-10 Long Scan of KLA-Tencor.

The measurement condition was under 2 μ m tip 1 mg force 10 scans
500 μ m long 2000 data points.

In the description and the following examples,

$$R_q = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=1}^N (Z_n)^2}$$

R_q is determined as follows:

5 A TAYLOR HOBSON FTS (Form Talysurf Series 2) profilometer/roughness measuring system is advantageously used to determined the root-mean-square profile height R_q (2DR_q) of the surface (also referred as roughness R_q before).

10 The system includes a laser head (product reference 112/2033-541, for example) and a 70 mm long feeler (product reference 112/1836) having a 2 mm radius spherical/conical head.

The system measures a two-dimensional profile in the chosen section plane to obtain a curve $Z = f(x)$. In this example the profile is acquired over a distance of 20 mm.

15 Various surface characteristics can be extracted from this profile, in particular its shape, undulation and roughness.

Accordingly, to determine R_q, the profile is subject to two different processes, namely shape extraction and filtering, which corresponds to mean line extraction.

20 The various steps for determining a parameter R_q of this kind are as follows:

- acquisition of the profile $Z = f(x)$,
- shape extraction,
- filtering (mean line extraction), and
- 25 - determination of parameter R_q.

The profile acquisition step consists in moving the stylus of the aforementioned system over the surface of the lens in question, to store the altitudes Z of the surface as a function of the displacement x.

30 In the shape extraction step, the profile obtained in the previous step is related to an ideal sphere, i.e. a sphere with minimum profile differences relative to that sphere. The mode chosen here is the LS arc mode (best circular arc extraction).

This provides a curve representative of the characteristics of the profile of the surface in terms of undulation and roughness.

The filtering step retains only defects corresponding to certain wavelengths. In this example, the aim is to exclude undulations, a form of defect with wavelengths higher than the wavelengths of defects due to roughness. Here the filter is of the Gaussian type and the cut-off used is 0.25 mm.

R_q is determined from the curve obtained using the following equation:

$$R_q = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=1}^N (Z_n)^2}$$

where Z_n is, for each point, the algebraic difference Z relative to the mean line calculated during filtering.

The grinding and fining process used in the examples is V-95 grinding followed by fining with a 15 μ m pad (from 3M).

- V-95 is a computer controlled grinding machine from LOH company with 3D disk cutter. The grinding time is about 1 to 2 minutes;
- Haze has been measured by Haze-Gard Plus made by BYK Gardner;
- Inspection with an arc lamp is carried out by using a BT X 75/LIS // Lamp made by Bulbtronics Inc. the light from the above lamp is directed towards the lens and the reflected light is projected on a screen. The image of the lens on the screen is visually inspected in order to see if there are fining lines.

EXAMPLE 1

A semi-finished lens SF lens made of diethyleneglycol bis-allyl carbonate copolymer (CR-39®) was generated by V-95 and fined with 15 μ m pad to a -1.25 power lens (back curvature 5.0 base, diameter 70 mm) without polishing. Fining process is done with LOH Toro-X-S/SL fining machine using a 15 μ m pad made by 3M. The fining time is about 1 to 2 minutes. The lens was then washed with water and soap and coated with an abrasion-resistant coating by the process of the invention using a thin flexible wafer and the inflatable membrane apparatus as described in connection with the figures.

5 drops of the liquid coating composition (0.12 g in total) are deposited on the fined main face of the lens. The thin flexible wafer is carefully placed on the liquid coating composition drops.

5 The resulting assembly is then placed in front of the inflatable membrane of the air accumulator and air is introduced up to a pressure of 84 kPa (12 Psi) so that the liquid coating composition is spread out in the entire fined main face of the lens.

10 The coating composition is then UV cured for 30 seconds using a UV lamp with high intensity 145 mW/cm^2 and wavelength from 330 to 490 nm. After separation, there is obtained a clear coating layer on the lens without any visible fine lines by illumination with an arc lamp.

UV curable liquid coating composition, in weight % :

15	- UVR-6110 (3,4-epoxycyclohexyl methyl-3,4-epoxycyclohexane carboxylate)	13
	- GE 21 (1,4-butanediol diglycidyl ether)	30.29
	- HDODA (hexane diol diacrylate)	10.85
	- SR-399 (dipentaerythritol pentaacrylate)	30.36
20	- SR 230 (diethyleneglycol diacrylate)	7.01
	- IBOA (isobornyl acrylate)	2.29
	- UVI 6974 (cationic photoinitiator)	5.25
	- IRGACURE 500 (free radical initiator)	0.82
	- SLF-18 (hydrocarbon base surfactant)	0.1

25

Flexible wafer :

30 A wafer made of polycarbonate with 0.6 mm thick plano sphere shape having a 5.50 base curve and a 68 mm diameter. The wafer is made by injection molding and is precoated with a release and protective coating solution.

EXAMPLE 2

35 Example 1 is reproduced except using a liquid coating composition of refractive index $n_D^{25} = 1.532$

This liquid composition has the following formulation, in weight % :

- | | | |
|---|---|---------|
| | - EPON 228 (bisphenol A epoxy resin) | 60 |
| | - GE 21 (1,4-butanediol diglycidyl ether) | 40 |
| | - IRGACURE 552 (photoinitiator) | 4 phr |
| 5 | - ITX (sensitizer) | 0.2 phr |

COMPARATIVE EXAMPLE 1

Example 1 is reproduced except using spin coating process and cured by conveyor UV with the same coating solution. The results showed that even a much thick coating layer on a fining lens (60 x Rq of surface roughness) by spin could not cover the fining mark. The spin coating was done by Headway Spin Coat and spinning speed was 600 rpm for 12 seconds and 2000 rpm for 4 seconds. Thereafter, curing was effected using a Fusion UV conveyor at 9 mm H bulb, 692 mW/cm² at 350 nm.

COMPARATIVE EXAMPLE 2

Example 1 is reproduced except using high index ($n_D^{25} = 1.57$) coating solution. This coating solution has the following formulation, in weight % :

- | | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 20 | - Diethyleneglycol diacrylate | 30 |
| | - Ethoxylated-8 bisphenol A diacrylate | 30 |
| | - Bis(2-methacryloylthioethyl) sulfide | 40 |
| | - IRGACURE 819 (photoinitiator) | 3 phr |

EXAMPLE 3

A PC SF lens was generated by V-95 and fined with 15 μ m pad to -2.00 power lens (back curve = 5.0 base) without polishing. The lens was then washed with soap and water and the same coating solution as in comparative example 2 is applied as in Example 1.

COMPARATIVE EXAMPLE 3

Example 3 is reproduced except using the same low index ($n_D^{25} = 1.518$) coating solution as in example 1.

COMPARATIVE EXAMPLE 4

Example 3 is reproduced except using a flow coating method. Flow coating is similar to dip coating which still cannot cover the fining lines in arc lamp even though the coating thickness is higher than $10 \times S_q$ of surface roughness and the haze level is low.

In that example, 5g of coating liquid was manually smoothly applied on the fined lens surface and turned around to let the liquid wet the whole surface. Then, the coating was cured using a Fusion UV conveyor at 9 mm H bulb, 692 mW/cm^2 at 350 nm.

EXAMPLE 4

A CR-39[®] SF lens was generated by V-95 and fined with 15 μm pad to - 1.25 power lens without polishing. The lens was then tinted in BPI black bath, commercially available, at 95°C for 15 min. After that, the tinted CR-39 lens was press coated by the same method as Ex. 1 with the commercial UV curable coating solution (HT-1000 from GERBER COBURN Inc.). The obtained lens has very good uniform color and very good transmission and low haze level. There is no any fining line seen in arc lamp after press coating.

EXAMPLE 5

A CR-39 SF[®] lens was generated by V-95 and fined with 15 μm pad to -1.25 lens without polish. After that, it was press coated by the same method as in example 1 with the commercial UV curable coating solution (HT-1000 from Gerber Coburn Inc.). The obtained lens has very good transmission and low haze level. There is no any fining line seen in arc lamp after press coating. The lens was then coated with an anti-reflective coating by using BAK 760 vacuum machine. It has the same properties as a commercial hard multicoated CR-39[®] lens made using a polishing step.

TABLE 1

Ex.	Lens materials	Fining process	Surface roughness (Rq)	Haze before coating	Coating refractive index n_D^{25}	Coating process	Thickness of coating	Haze after coating	Fining mark in arc lamp
Ex. 1	CR-39	V-95 + 15 μm fining (2 min)	0.3787 $[\mu\text{m}]$	89.8	1.518	Press coating	- 5 μm	0.37	No
Ex. 2	CR-39	V-95 + 15 μm fining (2 min)	0.3943 $[\mu\text{m}]$	89.8	1.532	Press coating	- 5 μm	1.50	No
Com. 1	CR-39	V-95 + 15 μm fining (2 min)	0.3758 $[\mu\text{m}]$	89.8	1.518	Spin coating	- 25 μm	0.35	Yes
Com. 2	CR-39	V-95 + 15 μm fining (2 min)	0.3831 $[\mu\text{m}]$	89.8	1.57	Press coating	-	6.70	Yes
Ex. 3	PC	V-95 + 15 μm fining (2 min)	0.2089 $[\mu\text{m}]$	83.1	1.57	Press coating	-	1.17	No
Com. 3	PC	V-95 + 15 μm fining (2 min)	0.2181 $[\mu\text{m}]$	83.1	1.518	Spin coating	-	2.40	Yes
Com. 4	PC	V-95 + 15 μm fining (2 min)	0.2163 $[\mu\text{m}]$	83.1	1.57	Flow coating	> 25 μm	1.15	Yes

Thickness of coating layers was measured by using cross-sectioned samples in microscopy of Nikon Optiphot-2 with 600 x of Epi illumination.

5

EXAMPLE 6

Example 1 was reproduced by using a very low viscosity (7cps) coating solution consisting of, by weight, 89% diethyleneglycol dimethacrylate and 11% bis-2-[(meth)acryloylthioethyl] sulfide (BMTES), with 3 phr photoinitiator/CGI-819 (Irgacure 819 from Ciba-Geigy: 10 bis(2,4,6-trimethylbenzoyl)-phenylphosphineoxide). The refractive index n_D (25°C) of the coating solution was 1.472. The observed coating thickness after curing is around 1-2 micrometers. There is no fining mark seen in the arc lamp after press coating although the coating thickness is very thin.

EXAMPLE 7

A 20 micrometers pad fined but not polished glass mould with surfaced roughness of $Sq=0.58\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ was press coated by the same method as in example 1 with the commercial UV curable coating solution (HT-1000).

- 5 The obtained glass mould has very good transmission and low haze level. There is no any fining line seen in the arc lamp after press coating.

COMPARATIVE EXAMPLE 5

- The same fined but not polished glass mould as in Ex.ample 7 was spin coated using Ultra Optics coating machine with HT-1000 UV curable
10 coating solution. The obtained glass has a lot of fining lines seen in the arc lamp.

CLAIMS

1. A process for making a coated optical lens blank free of visible fining lines which comprises:
 - (i) providing an optical article having at least one fined but unpolished geometrically defined main face;
 - (ii) providing a mold part having an internal and external surface;
 - (iii) depositing on said main face of said optical article or on the internal surface of the mold part a requisite amount of a liquid curable coating composition;
 - (iv) moving relatively to each other the optical article and the mold part to either bring the coating composition into contact with the main face of the optical article or into contact with the internal face of the mold part;
 - (v) applying pressure to the mold part to spread the liquid curable coating composition on said main face and form a uniform liquid coating composition layer onto the main face;
 - (vi) curing the liquid coating composition layer;
 - (vii) withdrawing the mold part; and
 - (viii) recovering the free of visible fining lines coated optical article.
2. The process of claim 1, wherein the liquid coating composition layer is cured under pressure.
3. The process of claim 1, wherein said mold part is rigid and its internal face inversely replicates said main face of said optical article.

4. The process of claim 1, wherein said mold part is flexible and the geometry of its internal face inversely replicates said main face of said optical article under the pressure applied in step (v).
5. The process of claim 1, wherein the curable liquid coating composition is a UV curable composition.
6. The process of claim 1, wherein the mold part is a transparent wafer.
7. The process of claim 5, wherein the mold part is a UV transparent wafer.
8. The process of claim 4, wherein the flexible part has a higher base curvature than the base curvature of the fined and unpolished optical article to be coated.
9. The process of claim 1, wherein the pressure exerted onto the mold part ranges from 10 kPa to 350 kPa.
10. The process of claim 1, wherein the pressure exerted onto the mold part ranges from 30 to 150 kPa.
11. The process of claim 4, wherein the flexible mold part is an inflatable flexible membrane.
12. The process of claim 4, wherein the flexible mold part has a thickness of 2 mm or less.
13. The process of claim 4, wherein the flexible mold part is made of flexible plastic material.
14. The process of claim 4, wherein the flexible plastic material comprises polycarbonate or poly(methylmethacrylate).

15. The process of claim 1, wherein R_q of the fined but unpolished geometrically defined main face ranges from 0.01 to 1.5 μm .
16. The process of claim 1, wherein R_q of the fined but unpolished geometrically defined main face ranges from 0.1 to 1.0 μm .
17. The process of claim 1, wherein the optical article is made of polycarbonate.
18. The process of claim 13, wherein said main face of the optical article has a R_q of about 0.5 μm .
19. The process of claim 1, wherein the optical article is made of diethylene glycol bis-allylcarbonate, polycarbonate, polythiourethane or episulfide material.
20. The process of claim 19, wherein said main face of the optical article has a surface roughness S_q of about 1.0 μm .
21. The process of claim 1, wherein the cured coating has a thickness of 1 to 50 μm .
22. The process of claim 1, wherein the cured coating has a thickness of 1 to 25 μm .
23. The process of claim 22, wherein the cured coating has a thickness of 1 to 10 μm .
24. The process of claim 23, wherein the cured coating has a thickness of 1 to 5 μm .
25. The process of claim 24, wherein the refractive index difference between the lens blank and the cured coating is up to 0.1.

26. The process of claim 1, wherein the coating composition is an anti-abrasive hard coating composition.
27. The process of claim 1, wherein the said main face of the lens blank is the back face of the lens blank.
28. The process of claim 1, wherein the lens blank is a tinted lens blank.
29. The process of claim 1, further comprising applying an anti-reflective coating directly onto the cured coating.
30. The process of claim 1, wherein said optical article is a lens or lens blank.
31. The process of claim 1, wherein said optical article is a transparent lens mold.
32. The process of claim 30, wherein said optical article is a tinted lens or lens blank.
33. The process of claim 31, wherein said lens mold is a glass mold.
34. The process of claim 30, wherein the said main face of the lens or lens blank is the back face of the lens or lens blank.
35. The process of claim 1, further comprising applying an anti-reflective coating directly onto the cured coating.
36. A process for making a coated article whose main surface has a surface state corresponding to a polished state which comprises:
- (i) providing an article having at least one finely but unpolished geometrically defined main face;
 - (ii) providing a mold part having an internal and external surface;

- (iii) depositing on said main face of said article or on the internal surface of the mold part a requisite amount of a liquid curable coating composition;
- (iv) moving relatively to each other the article and the mold part to either bring the coating composition into contact with the main face of the article or into contact with the internal face of the mold part;
- (v) applying pressure to the mold part to spread the liquid curable coating composition on said main face and form a uniform liquid coating composition layer onto the main face of the article;
- (vi) curing the liquid composition layer;
- (vii) withdrawing the mold part; and
- (viii) recovering the coating article having a surface state corresponding to a polished state.

37. The process according to claim 36, wherein the surface of the coated article has a R_q under $0.01\ \mu\text{m}$.

38. The process according to claim 37, wherein the coated article is a lens mold.

39. The process according to claim 38, wherein the lens mold is not transparent.

40. The process of claim 1, wherein the mold part is precoated by a release coating and/or protective coating.

41. The process of claim 1, wherein the mold part has a microstructure or a pattern to be duplicated in the lens blank coating.

42. The process of claim 36, wherein the mold part is precoated by a release coating and/or protective coating.

43. The process of claim 36, wherein the mold part has a microstructure or a pattern to be duplicated in the lens blank coating.

ABSTRACT

The invention concerns a process for making a coated optical lens blank free of visible fining lines which comprises:

- 5 (i) providing an optical article having at least one fined but unpolished geometrically defined main face;
- (ii) providing a mold part having an internal and external surface;
- (iii) depositing on said main face of said optical article or on the
10 internal surface of the mold part a requisite amount of a liquid curable coating composition;
- (iv) moving relatively to each other the optical article and the mold part to either bring the coating composition into contact with the main face of the optical article or into contact with the internal face of the mold part;
- 15 (v) applying pressure to the mold part to spread the liquid curable coating composition on said main face and form a uniform liquid coating composition layer onto the main face;
- (vi) curing the liquid coating composition layer;
- (vii) withdrawing the mold part; and
- 20 (viii) recovering the free of visible fining lines coated optical article.

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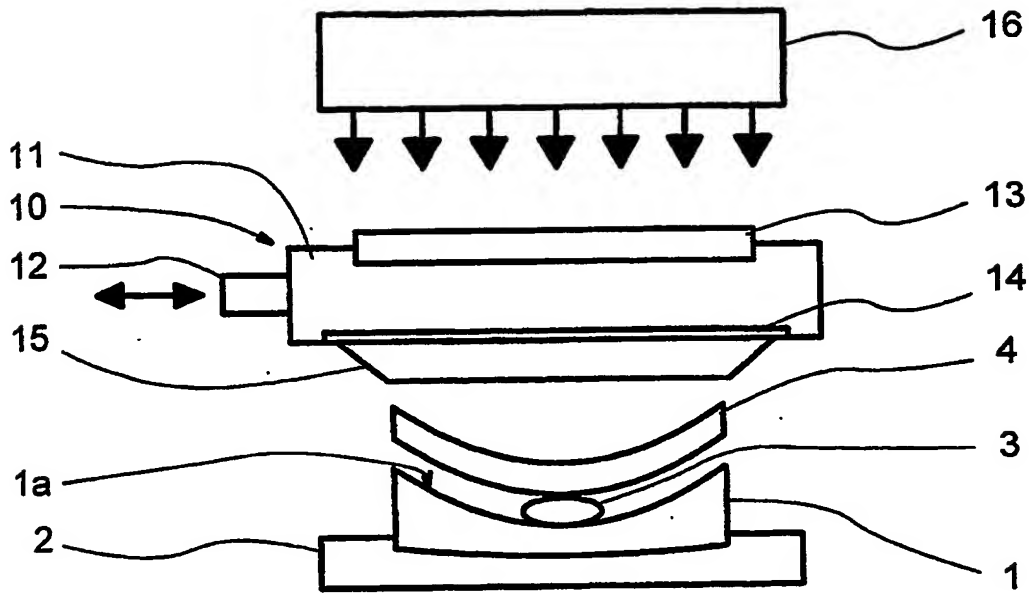


FIGURE 1A

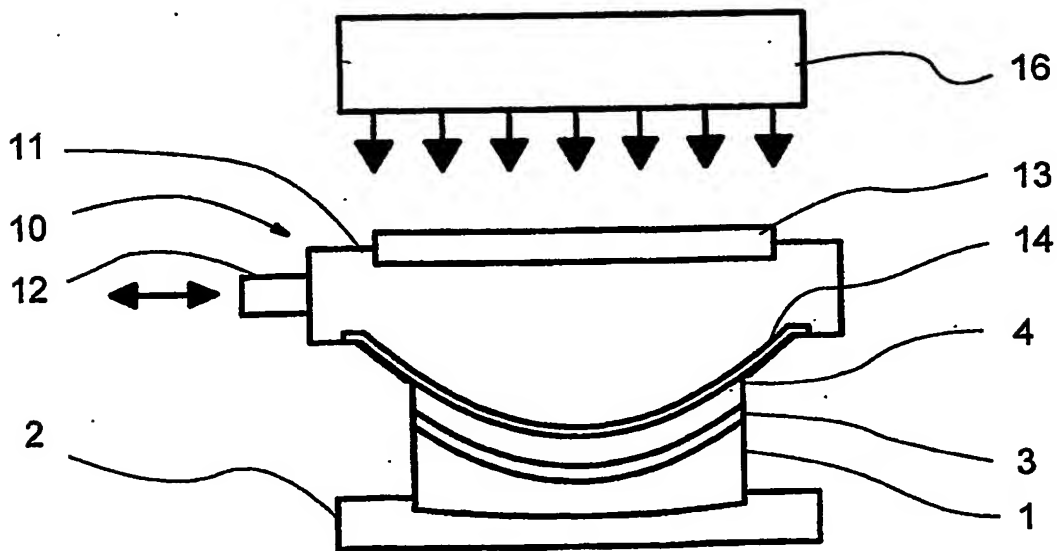


FIGURE 1B

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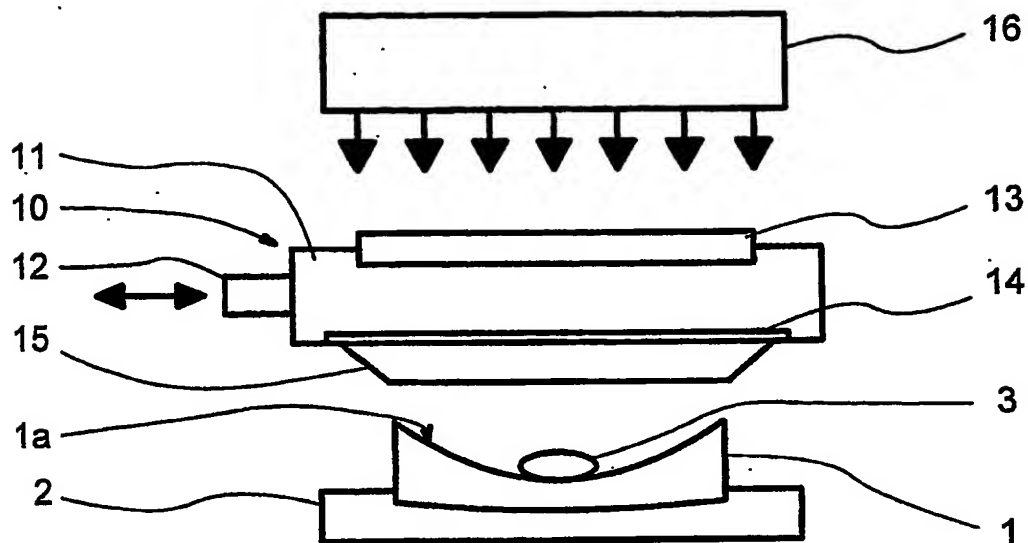


FIGURE 2A

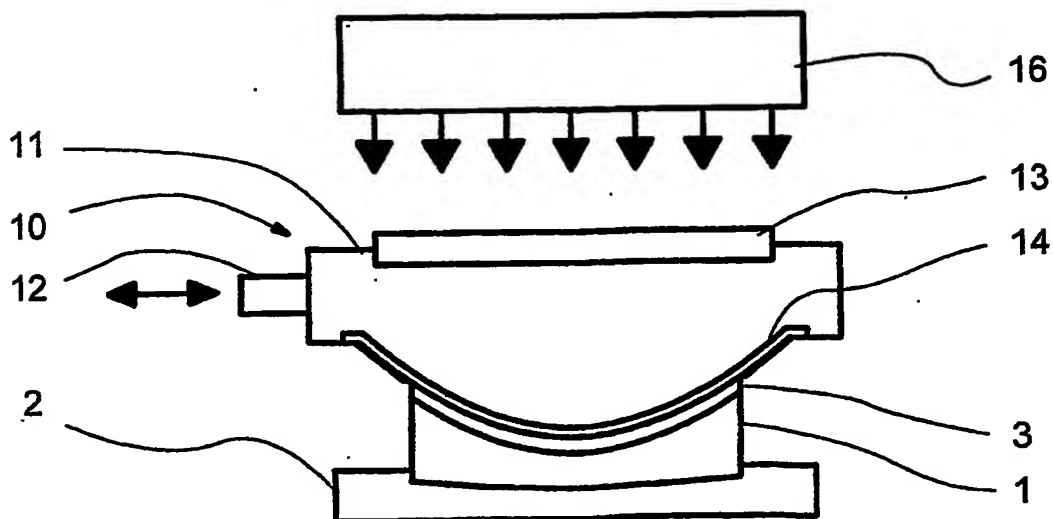


FIGURE 2B